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# ‘We Were Blindsided’: Female Wyoming Students Break Silence after Suing Sorority for Admitting Male



University of Wyoming campus in Laramie, Wyo. (University of Wyoming/Screenshot via YouTube)

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By **CAROLINE DOWNEY**

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Female University of Wyoming students who recently sued their sorority for inducting a male student are speaking out about the case for the first time, telling NATIONAL REVIEW that they were “blindsided” by the decision, which has stoked bitter division within the once tight-knit sisterhood.

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experience to its members after its president unilaterally instructed chapters to admit male members without going through the requisite process to change the organization's bylaws.

In April, U.S. District Court Judge Alan B. Johnson denied the young women's request for anonymity as a condition for proceeding with the case, which is still being adjudicated.

Forced into the public eye by the judge's order, plaintiffs Madeline Remar, Allison Cohan, and Hannah Holtmeier as well as non-plaintiff KKG member Katie Fisher explained in an interview why they felt compelled to fight for the historic gender exclusivity of their sisterhood.

"They changed the way they defined 'woman' without changing our bylaws or rules. They came out with a guide to support the LGBTQ community," Holtmeier said. "When it came out, they were just expecting us to follow suit and say, 'We totally agree, that's what a woman is.' They can't change their definition of a woman and expect us to change ours."

KKG's male member, sophomore Artemis Langford, stands 6' 2" tall and weighs 260 pounds, according to the complaint obtained by NATIONAL REVIEW.

Langford has not taken steps to transition, the complaint states; he still carries a driver's license that identifies him as a male, wears women's clothing only occasionally, and has refrained from treatments such as hormone therapy, feminization surgery, and laser hair removal.

Langford is sexually interested in women, the plaintiffs allege, using Tinder to meet them. Witnesses cited in the complaint said they've seen Langford sitting alone in private areas of the sorority house, where he can get a close look at women walking by, with a visible erection. Sometimes, a pillow sits on Langford's lap, the witnesses said.

"There definitely have been awkward interactions and creepy, weird moments, but that proves why we're doing this and speaking out, for other girls with the same situation where a biological man is in a sorority house or locker room with women," Holtmeier said.

After fudging the rules to admit male members, national headquarters has bent over backwards to accommodate Langford, the plaintiffs claim.

For their sophomore year, KKG members sign a one-year contract to move into the sorority house, binding them financially. Fisher inquired with headquarters about having her contract revised to give her more freedom to live out of the house if Langford would be staying there.

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an amendment or a clause to my contract saying that I'll be released from any obligation, and headquarters refused to do that.”

Following the lead of their national headquarters, chapter leaders also fudged established rules to secure Langford’s admission, according to the plaintiffs.

Langford, according to the women, had already attempted to secure a spot in the sorority during regular recruitment in the fall of 2022. However, he was dropped during formal rush because he didn’t leave a strong impression on the members he met. He tried again during the informal process, called “continuous open bidding” (COB), during which the chapter courts interested students through meetups to test for compatibility with the sorority.

The chapter’s membership chair assured members that the vote on Langford’s admittance would be anonymous and would have to be unanimous for him to be admitted. However, the online ballot asked members to identify themselves with their emails, which intimidated some women who felt uncomfortable with a male joining the sorority but didn’t want to be accused of transphobia.

Fisher, a freshman Kappa who was in the same pledge class as Langford, said that new members were left in the dark when it came to how COB worked and the likelihood of its resulting in a bid for the male student.

“I felt we were lied to. We were told that a transgender member was going through rush and, if we had any concerns, to go talk to our membership chair. She said there was a 99.9 percent chance he would not get in,” Remar said. Then out of nowhere, the leadership circulated a message in the sorority group chat announcing Langford’s acceptance, she said.

“It really hurt because we were blindsided. Once he’s offered a bid, there’s nothing that anyone could have done,” she added.

After Langford was welcomed in, dissenting members were effectively told by senior leaders to shove their objections. Despite their apprehensions about safety, they were told by the chapter’s president and vice president of standards to drop out if they felt uncomfortable.

Since then, the seniors’ stonewalling has had a chilling effect on other members’ speech, the plaintiffs said. Many of them feel similarly disturbed by the situation but are afraid to speak up, they said.

“I know there are girls who agree with us but, after they saw how we were treated by the ones who were against it, they kind of decided to keep their mouths shut and stay away,” Cohan said.

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“We’ll walk downstairs to eat, and they’ll get up and leave. Since I’m a senior I’ve watched the house grow a lot over the last four years, and girls have started to get super close,” Cohan said. “We were the strongest that I’d ever seen. Alumni have come back and told us how impressed they were with us. But after this happened, there was a huge shift and suddenly everything was politicized.”

“We’ve not been the same since,” Remar added.

The plaintiffs have received support from KKG alumni and other concerned citizens, but they’ve faced backlash on campus, the four said.

In April, the school newspaper the *Branding Iron*, where Langford is a writer, published an article about the plaintiffs’ legal battle that the four felt was unflattering.

“They posted it to their Instagram page and deleted all the comments that were in support of us. And they left us the ugly comments, calling us names, telling us to pluck our eyes out,” Fisher said.

In the comments section, the editors of the publication admitted to and apologized for scrubbing notes, many of them from fellow students, that were favorable to the plaintiffs.

“We recognize that a mistake has been made in deleting some of the comments under this post. The Branding Iron would like to apologize to any of the individuals who had their comments deleted, and we encourage you to continue sharing your thoughts about the article under this post,” the publication wrote. “The Branding Iron reserves the right to delete any comments that are exceptionally threatening or violent. We acknowledge that this was not necessarily the case for all individuals in this instance. We have internally addressed this issue and we will ensure that this will not happen again.”

Langford’s admission was granted with the permission of national KKG headquarters, which in 2018 issued a “Guide for Supporting our LGBTQIA+ Members,” declaring that the sorority welcomes both “women” and “individuals who identify as women.”

Rather than officially changing the organization’s bylaws, which would have required the consent of the board of directors and a two-thirds majority vote at the biennial convention, KKG’s national president simply issued guidance to chapters directing them to admit biological males. Now, the plaintiffs and their lawyers are seeking to prove that the unilateral move was illegal.

When asked for comment, KKG national headquarters said, “We are aware of the litigation filed in this case and intend to address it through the legal process. While we cannot comment in detail on this pending litigation, it

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Should the plaintiffs fail in their efforts to restore Kappa’s traditional admissions standards, the Wyoming chapter may face a recruitment crisis.

“My pledge class was over 30 people, but after Covid hit things have started to dwindle a lot,” Remar said.

Now pledge classes vary from five to ten young women, although last fall it was two. “After this, I think they’re really worried about numbers,” she said.

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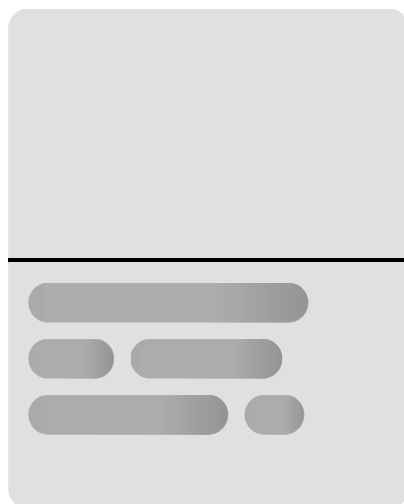
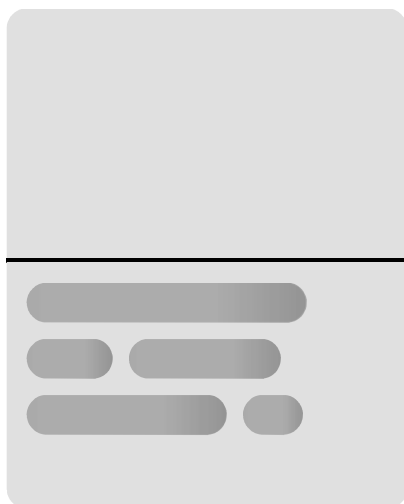
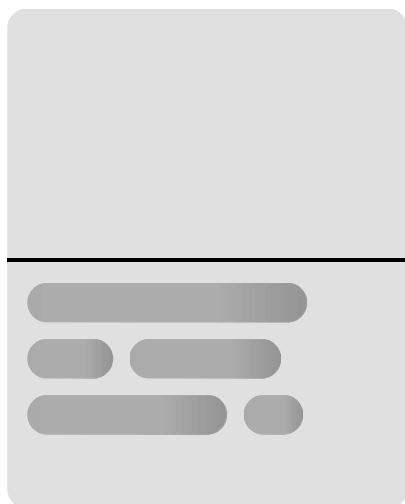
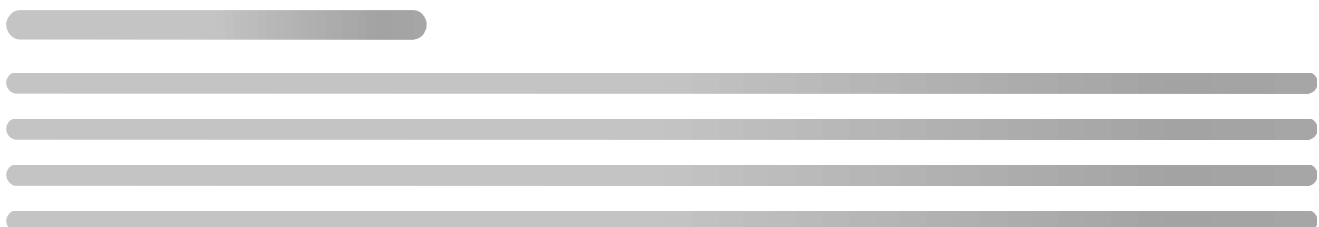
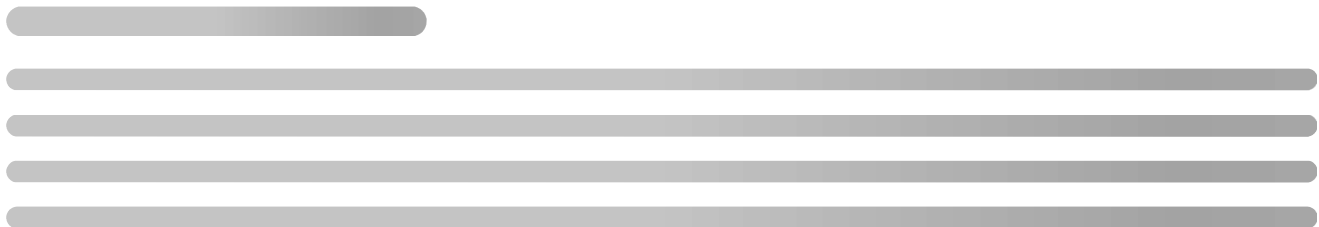
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